It was stated during the Budget Speech in July, 1996 that—

> "An interim non-statutory Insurance Regulatory Authority was set up in January, 1996. I now propose to introduce a Bill to make it a statutory body and to empower it suitably. When I return to the subject of insurance in the next Budget, I shall address some of the policy parameters outlined in the CMP, including the sequence of steps for the restructuring of the insurance industry."

The Government is currently processing a Bill for giving statutory status to the interim Insurance Regulatory Authority set up in January, 1996. However, it was reported that some sections of the employees of the insurance industry went on a 24-hour hunger strike on 27th November, 1996 protesting against the Government's reported move for privatisation of the insurance sector. It is also reported that a call for a day's strike is contemplated on the day following the date of introduction of the Bill in the Parliament for giving statutory status to the Insurance Regulatory Authority. It was reported by the LIC and the GIC that the strike on the 27th November, 1996 did not create any noticeable impact on the insurance industry.

Inviting Foreign Media Representatives to Visit Places of Tourist importance

1888. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Tourism invites representatives of media from abroad under its hospitality programme to visit various places of tourist importance located in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of media representatives invited during the last three years and States where they were taken for visit, year-wise;

(c) whether this has helped in promoting tourism in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof/

THE MINISTER OF PARLIA MENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d) the Department of Tourism invites travel writers, journalists, TV teams, travel agents, decision-makers, etc. under its hospitality programme which includes release of Mandatory Order Passages on Air India and Indian Airlines. The number of such guests who were invited from abroad during the last 3 years is as follows:

Year	No. of guests
1993-94	970
1994-95	1551
1995-96	852

These guests were invited to visit the major tourist attractions in different States and Union Territories. This programme has helped in promoting tourism to India as the media guest produce films and write articles on their return. This has resulted in increased tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings.

Proposal of Gujarat for Conversion of TV Transmitters

1889. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL:
SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received proposal from the Government of Gujarat to convert LPT Bhuj into HPT.

(b) whether the Government of Gujarat has also requested for the change of location of the HPT. Dwarka to another suitable site;

(c) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(d) the action taken so far in the matter;

(e) whether the State Government has been consulted for shifting of Dwarka TV to another site; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and the final decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (c) Representations have been received from the Government of Gujarat regarding upgradation of the LPT. Bhuj to HPT for wider coverage and shifting of the existing HPT Dwarka to a suitable site due to corrosion of its antenna/tower at the present site due to its proximity to sea.

(d) to (f) While the LPT at Bhuj has already been replaced by a 10 KW HPT with 100 M tower since 1994 and the permanent set up with 300 M tower, for wider coverage, is presently under implementation, a new site for locating the HPT at Dwarka has also been taken over through, the district authorities.

Formulation of Recruitment and Assessment Rules for General Field Staff of NICED

1890. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for the last so many years the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has no recruitment and assessment scheme/rules for general staff, the field level personnel of National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED); and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to formulate such a scheme at the earliest for efficient functioning of NICED and, ICMR, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) and (b) The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which is an autonomous body, generally follows the Government of India Rules in respect of its staff including those in the National Institute for Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED). A Recruitment and Merit Assessment Scheme on the pattern of a similar scheme in Defence. Research and Development Organisation is under consideration for the technical staff of the Council.

Representation for Loan by Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills Ltd.

1891. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a representation addressed to CMD, Industrial Development Bank of India, Bombay by the proprietor of Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills Ltd., Calcutta has been received;

(b) whether the company has urged for a loan of Rs. 15 crores for revival and modernisation of company's third unit at Asansol;

(c) whether it is a fact that revival of this unit will help the Handloom and Hosiery Textile Sector in West Bengal;

(d) whether it is also a fact that infrastructure facilities are available at Asansol for making the Unit Profitable; and

(e) if so, the action proposed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) As per information made available by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), M/s Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills Ltd. had approached IDBI in 1992 for financial assistance and the decision of IDBI was.conveyed to the company in February 1993.